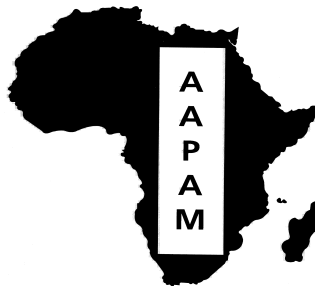


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THEME: THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS: CHALLENGES TO  
THE AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS



TOPIC: REVISITING THE ROLE OF PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT:  
STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN RESOURCE  
FUNCTION FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN AN  
ENVIRONMENT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

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## **1: INTRODUCTION**

This paper concerns public administration and the human resource function and discusses their role(s) in economic and financial crisis in terms of causes, impact and remedies. We will first highlight how the on-going economic crisis has created a global problematic situation that requires immediate remedy. The argument central to this is that public administration through the knowledge, skills, competence, professionalism, commitment, strategic foresight and action of its human resources will play a critical role in finding and implementing the remedy. The presentation emphasizes Public Administration as an actor in economic performance and argues that professionals were wrong to just watch as advocates of the private sector and market-based management approaches down-graded the importance of public administration. For Africa this literally made the State or Public Administration abandon the people to the forces of the market which forces were on one hand undeveloped and on the other not well controlled. The presentation takes the current economic crisis as a secondary problem given the development crisis African countries and people have lived through for ages. The author invites African governments and people to think again and harder about the current economic crisis and wonder whether this is their crisis or whether they are caught in someone else's crisis and diverted from the real crisis which is the abject poverty the continent's people have been living through. The focal point of the presentation is that whether economic crisis is seen in a narrow sense in terms of what countries have gone through since 2008 (which would be very unfortunate for Africa) or in a wider and more important view of the difficult poverty situation African countries have been caught in since time immemorial, the ultimate solution to the crisis lies in the hands of Africa's human resource. Therefore, the human resource management function in the public sector or even the private sector for that matter must be strengthened to deal with the crisis. Finally, the presentation makes some initial observation on the needed impact of the crisis on public administration in terms of what shifts Africa needs to make as consequence of the current crisis. The position of this presentation is the following: Yes, the current economic and financial crisis will have an impact on the socio-politico-economic lives of people. However, what is more interesting is to examine what reaction governments should have to counter the crisis. A number of

messages come out of the presentation. Public administration needs to reassess and reaffirm itself as a guarantor of the public interest and protector of the citizen from any threat economic and otherwise. In weak economies such as those in most African countries, this role is critical. What is required now is to re-assert the role of public administration as the instrument through which the State satisfies and protects the public interest against the dangers of market failures, private greed and imported economic crises such as the current one. The human resource in the public sector must adopt the value of serving the public in order to provide effective support to the State as it pursues the mission of protecting the citizens.

## **2: THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: A SITUATION THAT IS JUDGED PROBLEMATIC**

The current economic crisis is pre-occupying the leadership of the world at all levels. The G20, the Breton woods Institutions, the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, and governments all over the world have held meetings to chart ways out of the crisis. The report of the Secretary General of the United Nations on the Economic and Financial Crisis referred to the crisis as “the worst recession since the 1930s”. The crisis comes at the moment when the world is grappling with other crises including: the food crisis, climate change, and security. One of the worries about it is that as resources are channeled towards the economic and financial crisis, these issues that are critical to the survival of the world are likely to be shelved or receive less attention thus endangering future generations. The crisis is having a severe negative impact on development especially in developing countries. The “Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations on the Economic and Financial Crisis and its Impact on Development” (Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information – DPI/2535B – May 2009), points out the following aspects of the impact:

- The increased cost of external borrowing will affect debt sustainability in many countries.
- Developing countries are particularly adversely affected by the systemic flaws in the global financial system, but most are not in a position to respond with countercyclical measures

- External financing for developing countries has dried up.
- Trade flows worldwide sharply declined from the end of 2008 and have continued to decline in the first quarter of 2009
- Sharp declines in commodity prices are compounding the adverse impact for many developing countries, especially economies heavily dependent on primary exports.
- Remittance flows to developing countries appear to be moderating.
- Remittance flows are also at risk because of rising immigration controls, forced expulsions of migrant workers and further reduced job security for such workers.
- Aid flows may come under pressure in view of declining incomes in the major donor countries.
- Most developing countries are likely to experience severe balance-of-payment problems.
- One of the biggest risks is that of a prolonged labour market recession.
- Reduced investments in environmental protection, energy efficiency and renewable energy, water and land management, and forestation measures could slow efforts to make development more sustainable and to address climate change
- Prolonged recession and insufficient attention to social needs could cause problems of social unrest, rising criminality and weakening governance.

The crisis is having serious repercussions on employment which will make worse the situation of poverty around the world. The Director-General of the International Labor organization told the United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) Annual Conference “We are seeing an unprecedented increase in unemployment and the number of workers at risk of falling into poverty around the world this year.” According to the ILO

- 200 million workers are at risk of joining the ranks of people living on less than \$2 per day between 2007 and 2009.

- During the 2007-2009 period, between 210 million and 239 million persons would be unemployed, representing global unemployment rates of 6.5 and 7.4 per cent respectively, or increases of between 39 and 59 million unemployed people since 2007.
- the number of unemployed youth is expected to increase by between 11 and 17 million from 2008-2009, with the youth unemployment rate projected to increase from around 12 per cent in 2008 to up to 15 per cent in 2009.

These figures show that if the economic and financial crisis is not stopped and reversed, the world is facing a global social recession. For Africa which is already lagging behind the achievement of the MDGs and other international Agreed Development Agenda, the Crisis has come at the wrong time or just to put it differently, constitutes a fresh cut in a very bad wound! If African leaders do not think hard and find home grown strategies to deal with the crisis, if they go along with the tide of developed countries, they may be caught in a situation whereby they will divert resources from higher goals of their development to the crisis which for all intent and purposes was imposed on them by the forces of globalization. There are many actors in the fight against the economic and financial crisis but all eyes are turned towards public administration for a solution. While all eyes turn towards public administration for a solution, focus should be put on the people who work in public administration because it is them as the human resource who will conceive, plan, and implement strategies for dealing with the crisis.

### **3: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS AN ACTOR IN ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE**

In a way, the economic and financial crisis provides an opportunity for public administration to re-assess and re-assert itself as the guarantor of law and order in all sectors including the economic and financial sector, stability, peace and security however defined, and a minimum standard of living for the majority of people through provision of essential services especially to those whose economic status does not allow to access the service.. The crisis is too good an opportunity to miss. When given adequate attention, a crisis is a powerful and effective incentive for positive change. From the richest to the poorest of countries, from those that embrace capitalists economic ideology with emphasis on private sector and the “invisible hand” to those that believe and practice centralized government control and public

sector lead investment, the crisis has reminded us that when it comes to any threat paused to the population, government (public administration) is immediately looked up on to find remedy and assume its ultimate responsibility of protecting its citizens. In my mother language (Runyankore – one of the vernaculars in Uganda) there is a proverb that goes like: “*Ekyenyena egambira ekisibo tikyo egambira amashuyo*”!<sup>1</sup> The government has been told time and time again that it has no business in business; that it should let managers manage; that “government is the problem”<sup>2</sup>; that it should role back its frontiers; that it should deregulate and allow unlimited freedom of private enterprises; etc. In fact in Africa governments, during the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s, were told (forced) to abandon critical enterprises which were not performing well and drastically reduce financing social sectors on the understanding that these were not money generating sectors. However, despite the assault the public sector has faced since the mid 1970s, every time an economic or financial crisis hits, all eyes turn to government to provide solutions. When economic performance becomes bad as was the case in the 1930s, and 1950s after the World Wars, during the Asian financial crisis in the 1990s, and indeed during the current economic and financial crisis, even those who fundamentally agitate for exclusion of government from economic performance turn to government for help. The basic truth about the absolute necessity for effective public administration becomes obvious during the crises. This is because tough economic times are when the people need public services and protection from the government the most. All this boils down to reaffirming that public administration or government is a critical actor in economic performance. For Africa whose many countries have been for long trapped in the web of abject poverty, the role of government should not be minimized but enhanced appropriately to engineer and implement policies and strategies that can get the continent out of the poverty trap. Isn't being caught in a trap a crisis? This is the question for African governments, leaders and indeed the people themselves. If being caught in a trap is a crisis, why were governments (public administration) in Africa discouraged, (prevented) from protecting their people when the need was a desperate

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<sup>1</sup> Literary translated to say “ what the calf tells the rope that is tying it to protect it from the dangers it may confront if it is let free is not the same thing it tells the disease it gets when it breaks lose and scatters.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey A. Aisenach et al: History and Culture: Reaganomics: (Hoover Digest, 2004 # 4, fall issue).

one in the 1980s. The human resource in public administration; what were they thinking?

The irony is that in the discourse on public administration, most professionals of public administration literary stood by as the profession was attacked and ridiculed. Concepts such as “Bureaucracy” with the public interest, ethics, integrity, discipline, expertise, professionalism, accountability, effectiveness, speed, accuracy, respect for rules, regulations, procedures and rule of law, predictability etc were progressively reversed in meaning and turned into expressions of inefficiency, sluggishness, disinterest, wastage, etc. (see for example Michel Crozier’s Bureaucratic Phenomenon). All this has happened without the public administration professionals and experts recalling the original noble call of bureaucracy as conceived by Max Webber. We should have recalled that all these criticisms about bureaucracy had been foreseen by Webber as outcomes of a poorly operated bureaucracy but not as characteristics of bureaucracy itself. “Over the past 60 years, the polemic concerning the role of the state in economic and social development has substantially changed. From an ‘omnipotent’ state at the aftermath of the second world war to the ‘minimalist’ state of the 1980s, it has shifted to a new understanding that signifies the importance of both the state and market in performing invaluable functions in society. This in turn has led to a paradigm shift from the public administration to new public management and to the broader concept of governance.<sup>3</sup> Since the end of the 1990s, the importance of both the state and the market in performing invaluable functions in a society is acknowledged widely.<sup>4</sup> After decades of debate on the exclusive role of the state and the market, it is becoming clear that there is much complementarity than opposition in the roles of these two partners. During the past few years, there has been a discernible though gradual move away from such extreme positions.<sup>5</sup> Market forces alone cannot contribute to economic productivity and social progress without adequate developmental public policies and appropriate state intervention, since markets and civil societies will not thrive without a strong and

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<sup>3</sup> Guido Bertucci and Adriana Alberti, “The UN Programme in Public Administration: Reinventing itself to help reinvent public administration.” International Review of Administrative Sciences. Volume 71, Number 2, June 2005. pages 337-38.

<sup>4</sup> Guido Bertucci and Adriana Alberti. “The UN Programme in Public Administration: reinventing itself to help reinvent public administration”. International Review of Administrative Sciences. Volume 71, Number 2, June 2005. page 337.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts. 14 June 2000. (E/2000/66) pages 6 and 7. paras. 28 and 29.

competent public administration.<sup>6</sup> Public administration remains the pre-eminent locus and responsible guarantor of the public interest and a vital player within public management and governance. To support the role of the state and ensure that its goals are fulfilled, public administration continues to evolve, absorbing new methods and improving and adapting practices according to social and technological progress, internal and external pressures and cultural and contextual challenges. As public administration continues to provide the foundation for maintaining confidence in the stability and continuity of the state, efforts to enhance its professionalism and integrity and buttress its impartiality, legality and transparency are critical to the fulfillment of the state's overarching goals. Professionalism, impartiality, integrity, ethics, respect for rules, procedure, and due process can only be ensured by the human resource in the public service.

In the general conclusion to his book, among the problems specific to western industrialized countries, the late Guy Braibant (a respected thinker in Administrative Sciences) mentioned the problem of the relationship between administration and the private sector, in particular in economic matters<sup>7</sup>. That is more than twenty years ago. But the source of the economic and financial crisis currently rocking the world can be traced around this problem. What is required now is to re-assert the role of public administration as the instrument through which the State satisfies and protects the public interest against the dangers of market failures and private greed.

Despite the years spent discrediting public administration's intervention in the economy now to counter the effects of the crisis governments are doing what a few months back was considered inappropriate. They are guaranteeing bank deposits of their citizens, recapitalizing banks that are at risk, legislating to control financial markets regulating credit rating agencies, rescuing collapsing private enterprises as happened with General Motors in the USA etc. (read Joseph Daul, Solving the economic crisis: the role of European Union, Published by the Centre for European Studies, May 2009). What is interesting in all this is that it should have been a routine of public administration to do all this but was made almost taboo by the advocates of market forces.

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<sup>6</sup> Report of the Fourth Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration. 4-8 April 2005. page 14. para 15.

<sup>7</sup> See Guy Braibant: *Institutions Administratives Comparees: Les Controles*; (Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Service de polycopie, Paris, 1985) page 441

What is more interesting for Africa is that at the time when it would have been very important for governments to support failing public enterprises to save jobs for workers and curtail unemployment, governments were told and forced to sale or outright abandon the public enterprises and thousands of their people became unemployed overnight with very unpleasant social consequences. Why was it wrong for Africa? Why is it right for the other countries now? In other words, all efforts to find solutions to the financial crisis are coming up with what was already known but opposed. It has always been known that market failures require State interventions to be corrected as has been the case in the United States and the European Union. But then many experts had spent so many years convincing everyone that State interventions in economic matters are a very bad idea! Yet some scholars in this area had warned that withdrawing the State from centralized economic planning needs to be counteracted with strong regulatory capacity of the State<sup>8</sup>. The advocates of deregulation and relaxed state control ignored this advice. It is possible that the current economic and financial crisis is part of the price being paid for this. In as far as Africa is concerned on this issue, African public administration scholars and governments should not have accepted to be persuaded to make government abandon its people to face the market forces alone and bare handed. Left to market forces unprotected, poor people, such as most populations in Africa, get harmed. The crisis in Africa did not begin in 2008. Africa has been in crisis all along!

#### **4: DESIRED IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: AN AFRICA PERSPECTIVE**

However, at this juncture, how public administration responds to the crisis will determine how it is regarded in future, whether it will regain its recognition and respect or not as an instrument that has high concern for the well being of its people and therefore will engage efforts to create political, economic, and social conditions that will ensure a reasonable level of well being to free the initiatives and energies of the people for development. At this stage, there is need for a revolution in Africa's

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<sup>8</sup> See Chalmers A. Johnson: MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The growth of Industrial Policy, 1925 – 1975

thinking on the quality, quantity, and outlook of the human resource that is at the disposal of the State for its effectiveness. The human resource at the disposal of the State, let us call them public servants as they are classically referred to should constitute a sharp instrument of the State with the public interest, ethics, integrity, discipline, expertise, professionalism, accountability, effectiveness, speed, accuracy, respect for rules regulations, procedure and rule of law: an instrument whose role it is to foresee, prevent, or at worst manage any crisis or threat that confronts the people. There is now need for an ideological turn-around to give to public administration its due place in the management of public affairs and to put human resources at the forefront of the struggle for Africa's development. Below we highlight some of the shifts African public administrations need to make to create some positive impact of the crisis on public administration.

#### **4.1: Shift1: From external determinants to homegrown determinants of the role of public administration in Africa's development.**

Africa needs to think on its own about the role public administration in its development. After the world wars Keynesian economics and the state took center stage in economic planning and activity in developed countries. Because many African countries were colonies or protectorates at that time they were managed likewise. For example most of the enterprises in Uganda in the 1950s were created by the colonial government, not to develop Uganda, but to facilitate the exploitation of its resources for the benefit of the colonial government. After independence, the trend of State domination continued because the governments that took over from the British did not pause to think of the role of public administration in the development process. They simply continued with what they found in place and created more public enterprises. When towards the end of the 1970s "Thatcherism" and "Reaganomics" took center stage in USA and Britain, under the influence of the IMF and the World Bank, African countries followed suit and privatized, retrenched, re-adjusted, deregulated, commercialized, outsourced, devolved, etc without closely scrutinizing exactly what the role of public administration should be given their circumstances and how this role should be played. This kind of tautology needs to be abandoned by African governments so that they can think on their own what their role should be in the development of their people and how they should play this role.

Clearly for this revolution to take root there is need for a different kind of human resource.

#### 4.2: Shift 2: **Strive to enhance attractiveness of the Public Service**

Will the economic crisis highlight the importance of public administration and make it attractive as a profession? Will Africa's best brains be attracted to work in the public service? Else where there are some indications that the Public Service is becoming attractive again partly due to the economic crisis. In the USA "at the University of Washington, fall applications for students wanting to pursue a master's degree in public administration are up 33 percent while applications for undergraduates wanting to major in business are down 22 percent. It appears to be part of a national trend driven by an economic crisis and a new president"<sup>9</sup>. However, for Africa if the policies that include recruitment freezes, retrenchment, poor remuneration, etc remain dominant in the Public Service, there can not be hope for making the Public Service attractive to the best performers.

#### 4.3: Shift 3: **From focus on current needs to future needs as well: Prepare Public Servants who can manage tomorrow today**

For Africa emphasis now must be put on building the capacity of public administration to foresee, prevent or at least manage economic, financial and other crisis. Emphasis must be put on preparing public servants who are capable of managing tomorrow today. The needs to be addressed by public administration must not be assessed in terms of only today but especially in terms of many years ahead to be able to prepare against any crisis. Because when one comes to think about it, if public administration exists to cater for the needs of today only, then who caters for the needs of tomorrow? If Africa's Public Administration keeps on paying attention to the needs of today only, then it will only be addressing the crisis that hits Wall Street in Manhattan and the ripples from it that hit the streets of African cities. In this case, then who will address the crisis that originates from Africa such as food crisis in

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<sup>9</sup> See [Nick Perry](#) Seattle Times higher education reporter: "New president, economic crisis, more students looking to public service"

many countries, drought, environment degradation, energy, HIV/AIDS, security, etc.? Public servants must be masters of strategy and change management so that they steer the change that will ensure Africa's development.

#### **4.4: Shift 4: From old to new ways: Creating new public administration institutions and new ways of work**

One impact the crisis is having on public administration is the creation of new institutions. For example in the United States, upon taking office as President, Barack Obama given his emphasis on renewed openness and transparency created the Recovery Accountability and Transparent Board created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The Board is comprised of a Chairman and ten Inspectors General and charged with overseeing all funds dispersed under the Act ensuring that funds are being used in a manner consistent with the goals of economic recovery and job creation, as well as providing the American public with a transparent view of how that process is unfolding. In terms of work methods, President Obama's declaration during the speech he made accepting his nomination as the Presidential Candidate for the Democratic Party is significant. "We cannot meet 21st century challenges with a 20th century bureaucracy." The Recovery Accountability and Transparent Board did not embark on its work using traditional public administration bureaucratic means. It built a broader problem-solving community based on the concept that "none of us is as smart as all of us" and had a week long online Recovery Dialogue on IT Solutions that would "allow government to hear from a much larger and more diverse group of vendors, customers, and thought leaders in the IT community than would be possible using more traditional methods". (see [www.napawash.org/recoverydialogue/overview.pdf](http://www.napawash.org/recoverydialogue/overview.pdf)). Africa needs to take a strong lesson from here. If the USA cannot meet 21st century challenges with a 20th century bureaucracy, we should not expect to solve Africa's 21<sup>st</sup> Century problems with 20<sup>th</sup> Century European-modeled bureaucracy. The work for Africa here is big. It consists in not only re-affirming the importance of public administration in socio-politico-economic matters of the country but also in reworking the public administration to make it responsive and relevant to the current and future challenges of Africa. The

human resource in the public sector must adopt a new attitude towards work and towards the people they serve. There is a strong need to embrace and entrench public service values and virtues of service to the public, ethics, integrity, professionalism, etc. But most importantly, there is need to adopt approaches of work which permit the public service to provide for addressing the needs of the future. The public service must therefore create institutions that support strategic thinking forecasting and planning such as think tanks and also create working arrangements that enable it to constantly be in collaboration with the public to be able to serve it better. Moreover, Public Administration in Africa must realize through the current crisis that it has to take up more responsibilities because the development level of Africa's countries necessitates that.

**4.5: Shift 5: From rolling back the frontiers of the State to taking up more responsibilities some of them economic: The need for more and smarter human resource in the public service**

As the economic and financial crisis eats deeper and deeper into the demand for goods, especially hard durable ones such as automobiles, forcing manufacturers of such goods to cut down employment and even close, the government will be forced to inject more and more funds into such enterprises and infrastructure until the crisis subsides to the level where consumption of such commodities has recovered. After world war two for example American automobile manufacturers were forced to curtail making civilian vehicles to cater for big government orders especially of defense equipment. In this way the government purchases from American manufactures contributed greatly to ending the Great depression and growth of the country's economy. Some of the concepts, such as nationalization, that had receded in the past of public administration, may have to be resurrected to frame governments' intervention in economic activities to revamp crumbling production and employment sectors. Responsible governments do not let their people die or live miserable lives. Ideological considerations that had forced governments to shy away from direct investment and management of economic enterprises need to be revisited at this time of great need. During the debate on nationalization and creation of public enterprises one of the justifications for government intervention in economic investment was what was termed "taking charge of the commanding heights of the economy". It was up to each country to define what exactly constituted the "commanding heights" of its

economy. The global economic crisis has brought back the need for each government to pin point and take charge of the commanding heights of its economy to steer its people from the waves of the economic crisis. African governments in the 1980s were forced to abandon the commanding heights of their economies. This time the crisis should open their eyes wider and with more understanding. Developed countries do not abandon the commanding heights of their economies (especially during crisis). African governments should not.

However to define the commanding heights and design strategies for their management and exploitation for the benefit of the African people, there is need for high caliber public servants capable of strategic thinking independent of the influence or pre-conditions of foreign donors. In many instances African Public Servants have implemented strategies designed by outside experts with questionable knowledge of the African environment. What is required now is more and smarter human resource to counter arguments of external experts in favor of Africa's integrated and self sustaining development. Some of the policies and decisions that were taken by public servants at the insistence of donors and foreign experts have put more fuel on the fire of Africa's unending crisis (and we are not referring to the current global economic and financial crisis. For examples, in East African countries there is a general crisis of inadequate electrical energy. At a time when it would have been critical for governments to invest heavily in this sector they were advised that their economies could not support increased energy production. This advice was obviously wrong. One does not first develop the industrial sector, the service sector, the housing sector, etc which increases demand and consumption of electricity and then start thinking of developing the energy sector. The right approach would have been putting in place a strategic plan that would map projected industrial, service, commercial, housing development against the energy requirements. The investment in energy production should have preceded these developments or at least the two should have developed alongside each other. As it turns out now the demand for electricity in these countries is far larger than the supply. To sustain the delivery of service and avoid crisis there is need for human resources with Africa at heart who can forecast, plan and deliver the services in sustainable way. Another example of the lapse of public servants which causes perpetual crisis is hunger and famine resulting from drought which is predictable. In a number of African countries almost on a yearly basis there is a drought that causes shortfalls in food production and cause hunger and famine

plunging these countries in crisis. But we know that drought is predictable. Public servants responsible in this matter should plan how to store and save food during seasons of bounty so that it can be consumed during the seasons of drought. In fact more seriously in many of these African countries, the situation is always such that famine is raging in one corner of the country while in another they are throwing away food. The issue here therefore is that the crisis is not caused by lack of food but rather poor planning of distribution. When there is food in the country, it should be planned to feed all citizens of the country. Government can buy it and distribute it. Civil society organization can buy it and distribute it. Business people can buy it and sell it to those who need it. Voluntary groups can collect it and distribute it. It is all a question of having smarter human resources that can figure out how to do it. If Ugandans in Boston USA can consume *matoke* and *entura* all the year around, why can't the people of Teso do the same? There are a number of explanations here. One, someone has not intentionally planned to make the people of Teso consume the matoke and ntura. Two, the people of Teso are poor so even if a businessperson took the matoke and ntura to Teso they would not have the purchasing power to buy the food. Three, the civil society in the country is not mobilized to come to the help of the needy in different regions of the country. We will not mention the issue of climate (drought) because it is a simplistic explanation that exposes the weakness of public servants, business people, civil society and indeed the society as a whole. As long as Africa does not get smarter public servants to plan and implement things, it will remain in crisis.

carefully the advice they receive from some of their external development partners. Developing countries need to re-emphasize the capability of their public administrations.

#### 4.6: Shift 6: **Engineer demand to boost more and sustainable production.**

What governments will need to do is stimulating demand as both the US and China and all other developed countries are trying to do. During an economic and economic crisis, the tendency for consumers is to cut down on expenditure because of inadequate income. This forces manufacturers and suppliers to produce less by cutting off some operations, closing some businesses or laying off workers. When such measures become extensive the economy grounds to an almost halt. In such circumstances the needed dynamic for growth is boosting aggregate demand to stimulate continued production, industrial expansion and more jobs. For this to happen, one of the effective ways is for Governments to immediately begin injecting cash to resuscitate the financial system so that banks can begin to lend as the case in China has shown recently. More credit means demand begins to rise again. The problem with all this is that in most developing countries, the structure of their economies and their relative dependence on foreign development partners to make economic policies do not permit them to apply such demand stimulating financial management practices. Developing countries are in effect dealing with a crisis that is not theirs. They are dealing with a crisis that worries about the inability of banks to continue lending money, yet in many African countries, the majority of the people do not know that banks lend! They do not even ever deal with banks. They are dealing with a crisis that talks of fall in the value of houses, yet the majority of their people live in grass-thatched houses with no value at all. They are dealing with a crisis, which worries about growing unemployment when the majority of their population has been unemployed any way. They are dealing with a crisis that worries about people's inability to pay medical insurance when their people have had no access to healthcare for a very long time and schemes such as medical insurance are foreign to them. In other words, for the common man and woman in Africa the question can be: "What crisis are you talking about? This has been our life since we were born. Why is it a crisis now? If African leaders are not careful, if they panic and join the leaders from the developed world in the search for the solution to the crisis which started on Wall street in New York, they may be diverted from the crisis under which their populations have been living. This crisis consists of abject poverty, lack of or inadequate education, lack of or inadequate health services, degraded environment, poor maternal health care, lack of or inadequate transport infrastructure, lack of or inadequate markets for Africa's produce, insecurity, inadequate nutrition or even famine in many cases etc. This big and unending crisis will not be solved with simple

minds relying on solutions concocted from foreign situations! Public Administration in Africa must pay attention to the quality of human resources at its disposal.

## **5: CONCLUSION**

When markets fail, as they often do, even in those countries with a strong market orientation, or when markets create an unhealthy business climate, public administration has the duty to maintain its role of policy-making, regulation and mediation and enhance the delivery of services especially to the parts of the population that are too poor to provide for themselves. At this time of economic crisis, public administration, more than before needs to assume completely its responsibility of protecting citizens against any generalized threat. The crisis is economic and financial but it is already having severe social repercussions in terms of unemployment, uncertainty, and channeling resources away from development priorities including the Millennium Development Goals. The role of public administration in the management of the crisis needs to cover socio-economic functions including investment for sustaining economic growth, promoting employment for social development, facilitating infrastructure development and protecting the environment, promoting partnerships, managing development programmes, enforcing a strong legal and regulatory framework and providing essential services to those who are facing difficulties because of the crisis. Instead of engaging in an old standing debate on which of the two public or private sector is more important, Governments must work out the best balance between the market and public administration and specify ways through which civil society can participate to contribute to the search and implementation of the solutions to the economic and financial crisis.

In this presentation we have privileged the view that in addition to traditional roles, the State needs to take up the role of planner, regulator, cushion of citizens and shock absorber during bad economic times, redistributing wealth and propping up demand during economic recessions. We have also cautioned Africa's public administration not to panic and get diverted from the crisis under which the continent has been living. On the contrary, Africa's leaders now need to take advantage of this crisis and place their public administration to assume its responsibilities, make strategies for rescuing Africa's people from poverty, bail out enterprises that are critical to the

development and employment of the people and provide stimulus packages to stimulate investment in areas that are critical to the development of the continent and re-emphasize the provision of services such as health and education to populations that cannot afford them left on their own. This time, the crisis may have given to them arguments to support the necessity for governments to make investments in enterprises they consider critical to the development of their people. But for all this to happen, the human resource function must be given the attention it deserves. Without high quality human resources, Africa governments will continue depending on ideas and handouts from foreigners and this will continue sustaining the crisis in Africa Basically given the poverty situation in which many citizens of Africa have been living the current global economic crisis is nothing by comparison.